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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd on the Occasion

H. Gibson () OF THE

F U N E R A L

O F

M^{rs} *Elizabeth Gibson*.

Together with a Short

A C C O U N T

O F H E R

L I F E.

L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year MDCXCII.

A
SERMON

Preach'd on the Occasion

OF THE

FUNERAL

OF

Mr. Elizabeth Gibson.

Together with a Short

ACCOUNT

OF HER

LIFE.

LONDON.

Printed in the Year MDCXCII.

A

Funeral Sermon.

PSAL. XXXIV. 19.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

I Have been desired to discourse on these words upon the occasion of a worthy Person lately deceased, as being most agreeable to the many afflictions God exercised her with, and the deliverance of which he made her partaker.

In them we have a righteous person described, *First, by his Afflictions, Many are the afflictions of the righteous.* Where we have the number or variety of his afflictions: The righteous are subject to afflictions, and these may be both *many* and *various*.

And then, *Secondly, by his Deliverance:* where we have both its *Author* and *Universality*.

The *Author* of the Deliverance is God. As 'tis by his Providence we are brought into afflictions, so 'tis by the same that we are delivered. What the ignorant ascribe to Chance and Fortune, the godly ascribe to Providence. They eye him as the principal Inflicter, and this inspires them with patience; and as the chief Deliverer, and this fills them with thankfulness.

B

And

And then the *Universality* of it, *out of them all*: The godly in this World are subject to many and great afflictions, which as God is pleased in his wise and holy Providence to bring them into, so by the same holy and wise Providence, he brings them out of them.

The words in themselves are a doctrinal Proposition, wherein the Psalmist doth both assert the afflictions of the righteous, and their deliverance. Or you may resolve them into these two Observations.

Observat. I. That the godly are subject to, and frequently exercised with many and various afflictions.

Observ. II. That God delivers the righteous out of those many and various afflictions wherewith he is pleased to try and exercise them: Or as you have it in the words of the Text, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous*, &c.

Now in speaking to these words we shall shew,

I. Who is to be understood by the *righteous* person.

II. That the righteous are subject to *many* and great afflictions; with their Nature and Causes.

III. Open how God *delivers* his out of the many and great afflictions wherewith he exercises them.

IV. Apply it.

I. We shall open whom we are to understand by the *righteous*: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous*. This is a term by which the godly are frequently described in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament. *Righteous* is a relative term, and hath respect to a Law or Covenant. Now there is a twofold Law or Covenant.

1. The

1. The Covenant of Innocency, which was the Covenant of Works.

2. And then there is the Covenant of Grace in the Gospel, which is called *the Law of Faith*. Rom. 3. 27.

1. The first Covenant requires a perfect, personal and persevering Obedience; the first and the least transgression lays us open to its Penalty. For *curst is every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*. The least transgression of the Law renders a man unrighteous. So that in the fallen state none can be righteous with regard to the first Covenant and Law. And though renewing Grace changes all the Faculties of the Soul, and enables it in some measure to obey the Divine Law; yet in this sinful state we cannot give that perfect Obedience which the Law requires. In this state there ^a *is none that liveth and sinneth not*. ^b *Who can say he hath made his heart clean?* and ^c *if any say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him*. We every day sin against God; and this, our Saviour's direction implies, when he teaches us to ask for *daily forgiveness*; for it would be absurd to enjoin us to ask the forgiveness of the sin we do not commit. So that there is none that can now be denominated righteous in conformity to the first Law and Covenant. The Word in the Original, which we render *afflictions* in our Text, may be rendred *Sin*; for it signifies both the evil of Sin, and the evil of Affliction. It may be rendred, *many are the sins of the righteous*, as well as *afflictions* of the righteous. And so it is in other places rendred. As *Psal. 28. 3. Draw me not away with the wicked and the workers of iniquity*. There is the same word. *Psal. 94. 3.* and in other places it is

^a Ec. 7. 20.

^b Prov. 20. 9.

^c 1 Job. 1. 8.

used to signifie *Sin*. We may say, Many are the sins of the righteous, but he delivers them out of them all, both by pardon and sanctification; as well as he delivers them out of their afflictions. None then can be denominated righteous with respect to the first Law and Covenant.

2. But there is a *second* Covenant, which is called the Covenant of Grace. Now with respect to this Covenant it is that we are said to be righteous; and though we cannot be righteous with respect to the first Covenant, yet we may be accounted so by virtue of an Evangelical Righteousness: and this is twofold.

(1.) Evangelical Righteousness imputed, which was wrought out by Christ both by the Holiness of his life, and by the Sufferings of his death, and is imputed to them that believe in him. We are said to be ^a *the righteousness of God in him*. And ^b the Apostle desires to *be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*. Therefore we read ^c *as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*. As the sin of the first Adam was imputed to all his Posterity for their condemnation, so is the Righteousness of Christ to all his for salvation and life: and with a regard to this Righteousness of Christ it is that we are called righteous.

(2.) There is also an inherent Righteousness; for Christ justifies none by his (imputed) righteousness, whom he doth not sanctify by his Spirit and Grace. Christ by his Spirit inwardly renews all the Powers of the Soul, and gives to it in some measure, a conformity

formity to his Law. Therefore it is said, ^a *The* ^{Tit. 2.} *grace of God that hath appeared unto all men, teacheth* ^{11, 12.} *us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly in the Government of our selves, our various appetites and affections, righteously in the discharge of all those Duties we owe our Fellow-Creatures, and godly in the discharge of all those Duties we owe to God; depending upon him as our first cause, living to him as our last end, enjoying of him as our chief good, and submitting to him as our Sovereign Lord: admiring his Wisdom, and giving up our selves to the Conduct of it; loving his Goodness, reverencing his Power, fearing his Justice, imitating his Holiness, and trusting his Truth, and worshipping him upon the account of the infinite eternal unchangeable Perfections of his glorious Nature. So that it is with respect to this Evangelical Righteousness, that the Godly are denominated Righteous. They are righteous both in regard of the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and his Righteousness and Holiness which is imparted. So 'tis said of Zachary and Elizabeth, ^b *They were both righteous, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless.* ^{Luke 1.6.} Righteousness as it signifies a principle of Holiness, is frequently taken universally and in an extensive sense, for all those Duties we owe either to God, others, or our selves. So 'tis taken in the forementioned place. Sometimes 'tis taken particularly and in a more restrained sense, for those Duties we owe our Fellow-Creatures, and obedience to the Commands of the second Table. So when the Apostle appeals to the *Thessalonians*, and God himself, of the unblameableness of his Conversation, wherein he is imitated by every true Believer,*

Believer, *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved our selves among you that believe,* 1 Thess. 2. 10. This principle of Grace that is communicated to a Believer, makes him endeavour to abstain from all known Sin, and to perform all known Duty. Therefore none can claim being justified by Christ's Righteousness, that are not sanctified by his Spirit and Grace. Christ saves none by his Blood, but whom he sanctifies by his Spirit. The same Faith that unites to Christ, and is the foundation of the imputation of his Righteousness for Justification, the same Faith unites to Christ as the living Spring and Fountain of all Grace, whereby we are enabled to live to him: The same Faith that justifies, sanctifies; the same Faith that unites us to Christ as a Priest, unites us to him as an influential Head. So that it is by the New Covenant that we are denominated righteous, by vertue whereof Christ's Righteousness is imputed, and his Spirit and Grace imparted, which inables us to walk according to the Rule that he hath prescribed in his Word; and he that is truly righteous, disclaims the righteousness of the first Covenant; (never expects any Righteousness or Salvation by that, and says, with the Apostle, *by the Law I am dead to the Law*) and wholly cleaves to that of the second for his acceptance with God, equally depending on Christ for the Justification of his Person, and the Sanctification of his Nature. This is the righteous Person of whom the Text speaks, *Many are the afflictions of the Righteous.*

And such was the excellent Person decess'd, who was a convincing Instance, that a renouncing of our own righteousness, and dependance on Christ's, is
very

very reconcileable with the highest endeavours after the greatest Personal holiness, and closest walking with God in the Duties we owe him and others; of which she was a very imitable Example: for which you are referred to her adjoyn'd Character, drawn by her nearest Relation, who cannot think or speak of her but with the greatest Affection and Veneration of the Grace of God that shone in her.

II. We are to shew that the Godly are exercised with many afflictions; with their Nature and Causes. It is one of the most difficult appearances of Providence, that those who are righteous, who love God, and God them, should be exercised with multitudes and varieties of afflictions. This puzzled the most knowing among the Philosophers of the Heathens. The great question that was agitated between Job and his Friends was, How an evil thing could happen to a good Man? They falsely infer'd, That Job was an evil Man, because afflicted. Many accounts the Philosophers gave of it, but the Scripture informs us of the true one. Some of the Heathens asserted, That they were no real evil, and that a wise Man was happy in Phalaris's Bull: but this was too fine and subtle. Others had recourse to a false supposition, the pre-existence of Souls; and that for sins committed in another state, we were sent into these bodies to be punished. The account others gave was this, That afflictions were sent as tryals and exercises of Mens virtue, and that hereafter their reward would be according to the difficulties and evils they sustained with patience here. They inferred, That there was a future state of retribution, because.

because many times wickedness prospered, and virtue was oppressed, and the dispensations of Providence seemed so unequal. But the Scripture gives us the true account, That all sin and misery entred in by the Fall of the first Man; which one of the Philosophers seems to have a particular respect unto, when he says, we have lost the *θεῖαν φύσιν*, the divine Nature, and the *τὸ θεοειδὲς* the image of God *ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ* in our head. A very strange expression! and at which I have often wondred. The Scripture (I say) clearly informs us, how it comes to pass that God is pleased frequently to exercise his People with great and various and long afflictions. That God doth so, is clear: for you cannot single out a Saint in Scripture, but he hath met with many afflictions. It would be too long to enumerate all the afflictions with which the Godly have been exercised, the tryals of the Patriarchs and ancient Saints. Job is made the great Instance of God's afflicting Providence: and then our blessed Lord himself, who was free from all sin, how many were his troubles! he is said to be ^a *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*. God tries the Righteous with many and sharp and long troubles. *Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward*, and the Godly are not exempted from this common lot. This is one Article of the Covenant of Grace; *If my Children forsake my law and keep not my commandments, I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes*. Afflictions are made one character of God's adopted Children, so far are they from being an instance of the Divine displeasure.

^b *Every Son whom he receives, he doth chastise*. God for various wise and holy ends doth exercise his People

^a *Isa. 53. 3.*

^b *Heb. 12. 6, &c.*

People here. And the Deceas'd was a great Instance of it, which we shall here omit the Relation of, because you may see it in the short but true and full Account of her Life annexed by her dear Relation, who as he was enabled to give it by his constant Observation, so also by the several Papers which she had left behind, which did contain an Account of the various dealings of God with her; of which she was wont to take a very particular Notice, and to make useful Reflections thereon, whereby you may see how this Text was verified in her; *Many are the afflictions of the righteous.*

Now these afflictions are of a various Nature; sometimes they are to correct for antecedent Sins; sometimes to prevent future ones: sometimes they are sent for the exercise of Grace, and sometime by way of Instruction.

(1.) Sometimes they are sent for antecedent Sins, and then they partake of the nature of Judgments. How many times may we read our Sins in our Afflictions! We sin, and God corrects us for our Sins. And many times our afflictions have in them the evident marks of those Sins that went before. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you*; for their sinful disorders they were thus judged. *1 Cor. 11.*

(2.) Sometimes Afflictions are sent by way of trial. Tho' Affliction always supposes Sin; (for were we free from Sin, we should be free from Affliction; in the State above, where there is no Sin, there will be no Sorrow :) Yet sometimes they are sent not so much for the correction of past Sins, as for the trial of our Grace. God many

times sends Afflictions, to see how his People will carry it under them: therefore they are called ^{1 Pet. 1. 7.} *the trials of Faith*; they are what the Touch-stone or Fire is to Gold, which discovers whether 'tis true or no, or what dross may be mixed with it: so Afflictions tend to discover what the truth, strength and purity of Grace may be; which is a more valuable discovery to a Child of God, than that of Gold that perisheth. Thus God tried *Abraham*, by commanding him to offer his only and beloved Son, and thereby had a sensible experiment of *Abraham's Faith*. And so frequently by Affliction, God tries the Grace that is in his Peoples hearts, and thereby draws it forth into a more vigorous exercise, and thence both purifies and strengthens the Habit and Act.

(3.) They are sent many times by way of prevention; sometimes for the prevention of greater outward Evils, and sometimes for the prevention of sinful Evils. How many times should we depart from God, were it not that we are confined by Afflictions! God doth many times hedge up our way with the Thorns of afflictions, that so we may not go in those Paths that are displeasing to him, which would wound and defile our own Consciences, and interrupt our Communion with him. We know not how much moral and sinful evil, our natural afflictive Evils many times prevent.

(4.) Sometimes they are sent by way of Instruction. They instruct us in the vanity of this World, and that it is not in the nature of those things that compass us about, to make us truly blessed. We are apt to have too high an esteem of this World, but God is pleased by Afflictions,

to imbitter this World to us, that hereby he himself might become more dear to us ; these are some of the Causes of Afflictions.

III. We come now to shew how God is pleased to deliver his People out of their Afflictions. As it is by the Providence of God that we are brought into them ; so it is by the same Providence that we are delivered out of them. We are not brought into any evil, but it is from the disposing hand of God. There is not the least ingredient in the bitter Cup, but 'tis put in by a Father's hand. We are too apt in an hour of temptation, thro' the unbelief that is in our hearts, to call in question the Providence of God, and the Wisdom and Goodness thereof. 'Tis a great thing firmly to believe a wise disposing Providence. ^a *A Sparrow does not fall to the ground without our heavenly Father ; and the very hairs of our heads are all numbred ;* wherefore it is God by his Providence that brings us under Afflictions, and the same Providence also, that delivers us. Now there are many Afflictions to which we lie open, and from which, God delivers and preserves us, that we are not actually exercised with them. So that we may say, Altho' many, and frequent, and constant, are the Afflictions of the Righteous ; yet their Afflictions might be far more than they are. God might exercise the Soul and Body at the same time ; but he contends in measure, and ^b *stays his rough wind in the day of the Eastwind.* Many times when God lays Afflictions on the Body, he gives inward Supports to the Soul, and shines on that with the Light of his Countenance, and the Sense of his Love. So that we can never be

in those circumstances wherein we have not reason to bless God for the Mercies that he is pleased to mix with our Afflictions. Tho' our Afflictions are many and great, yet our Mercies are ever more and greater than our Afflictions. But as God delivers his from many Afflictions into which they might fall; so with reference to those Afflictions wherewith they are exercised, God doth deliver them out of them. And here lies one great difference between the Afflictions of Sinners and Saints; the Afflictions that Sinners endure, they are but part of those eternal Punishments they shall undergo in the future state. The inward troubles and horrors of their Minds and Consciences, are but the beginnings of those eternal horrors that they shall shortly fall into. The Pains that they undergo in their Bodies, are but the beginnings of those infinite Punishments which they shall endure in the future state. So that there is a vast difference between the Afflictions of the Wicked and those of the Godly: To the Wicked, they are but part of the Curse, and the beginning of those eternal Punishments that shall be inflicted on them; but to the Godly, they are not a Curse, but turned into a wholesome Medicine: They here prepare them for the Crown of Glory that shall afterwards be given them. So that here is intimated the vast difference between the Afflictions of the Godly, and those of the Wicked. Now God various ways *delivers* his.

(1.) He *delivers* them by supporting them under all their Afflictions. As the day is, so shall their strength be. God always proportions the Aids of his Grace to the various Trials and

Diffi-

Difficulties wherewith his are exercised in this World. God hath promised, that they *shall not* ^{1 Cor. 10. 13.} *be tempted above what he will enable them to bear*, and that he *will with the temptation make a way for their escape*; and one own way of escape is, when we have a sufficiency of Grace given in to enable us to bear our Afflictions. 'Tis one and the same thing, to have our Strength suited to our Burthens, or to have our Burthens lessened: When the holy Apostle had *a thorn in the Flesh, a messenger of Satan sent* ^{2 Cor. 12.} *to buffet him*; by which we are to understand all 7. kinds of Temptations and Afflictions; he *prayed thrice* that God would *deliver* him from it. What was God's answer? *My Grace is sufficient for thee, and my Strength shall be made perfect in weakness*. How doth the Apostle carry it under this answer? *Most gladly therefore will I glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me*. He was glad his Afflictions were an occasion of the exercise of the Divine Power; therefore it is that Believers *glory in tribulation, because tribulation* ^{Rom. 5.} *worketh patience, and patience experience, and expe-* ^{3. 4.} *rience hope*. Afflictions give an experience of the Power of God, in strengthening of us under those various tryals that he is pleased to bring upon us: and then God delivers us when he gives in those inward Supports of his Grace that are suitable to our trials.

(2.) God *delivers* us when he sanctifies us by them: And this is the great End of God in sending Afflictions; it is to change and transform our Souls more into his blessed Image; and no matter what the outward Affliction be, if it may be made up with more of the Communications of his Spirit and Grace. It is the Nature of Affli-

Affliction to remove something that is comfortable, or it would not be Affliction; Pain takes away the good of Ease; Sickness, the good of Health; Disgrace, the good of Reputation; all Afflictions remove something that is good: But no matter what the outward Good is, that is remov'd by Affliction, if it may be made up with the Communications of more Grace to our Souls. Now this is the great End of God in his correcting Dispensations, to make his more partakers of his Holiness. Christ tells one of the Churches, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.* Afflictions are a token of the divine Love, and are sent to make us more conformable unto him. God makes use of Afflictions to shew us the evil of Sin, and the vanity of the World, to make us more out of love with it, and to long more for the state of Felicity above. So that God makes Afflictions a means of their Sanctification. And this is one great way whereby God delivers his People.

(3.) God *delivers* them by making them partakers of inward Consolations. As their sufferings do abound, so many times their inward Joy and Comforts do abound. When God afflicts the outward man, he is pleas'd to shine upon the inward man with the light of his Countenance, and sense of his Love; he not only supports them, but comes in with choice Comforts upon their Spirits. *Thy favour is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life.* The sense of the Love of God takes away the sense even of the bitterest Afflictions.

(4.) God *delivers* his People out of Afflictions, sometimes into a more prosperous and easy state in this World; but if he does not so, he delivers them

able, the Dis- s- tter by uni- the- Fati- cles- ove- ent- are- God- of- us- the- Af- his- ble- ers- a- m- rd- an- his- in- ur- fe- s- re- rs- m- them always out of them into the happy State above, which is infinitely better. Therefore the Apostle says, *"Our light affliction which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."* 2 Cor. 4. 17. There is no comparison between light Afflictions and weighty Glory, short Afflictions and eternal Glory. God doth by Afflictions prepare his People for, and makes them to long after the State of perfect Felicity above. So that all the Afflictions of the Godly finally issue in this, That they are carried from a World of Sin, Temptation and Trouble, to the Regions of Light, Life and eternal Joy above: all their black and dark Nights of trouble, end in one bright and eternal Day. Here it is that many Tears trickle down our Cheeks; but above, all tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes, and everlasting Joy shall fill our Heads and Hearts. Here we are Tried, above Rewarded; here we Sorrow, above we shall everlastingly Rejoyce; there Grace shall be turned into Glory, Faith into Sight, Hope into Enjoyment; there all that is imperfect shall be done away, and all that which is perfect will come; there we shall never sigh, nor mourn, nor grieve more, nor complain under any of those natural or sinful disorders of Body and Soul that here afflict us, and keep us at a distance from God, and interrupt our Communion with him. There will be none of those uneasinesses that here we mourn over, no more remains of Sin, no more hiding of the Light of God's Countenance, nothing to darken our Minds, or deaden our Hearts, or disturb our Affections, or to be an impediment to us in his Service. Above we shall see him without any Cloud,

Cloud, love him without any Allay, and enjoy him without Interruption or End. And thus God dealt with this gracious Person; he supported her Soul under the many Afflictions with which she was exercised, so that underall she would only say, *O Lord, How long wilt thou be pleased thus to exercise me! inspire me with Faith and Patience, and let me be resigned to thy will:* and God did Support and Comfort her under all those her sharp Tryals, and now hath given her a blessed Deliverance into the Regions of Light and Life above. Which will be the certain Issue of the troubles of those who resign themselves to God, and put their trust in him.

Thus you see who those *righteous* are that God afflicts, and what their *afflictions* are, they are sometimes *many*, sharp and long, and are sent for Correction, Prevention, Trial and Instruction; and under all he supports, sanctifies, comforts, and *delivers* them sometimes into a more easy and prosperous State in this World, but if not, brings them into an eternal Glory above.

IV. Now it remains that we make some Use.

Use I.

From what hath been said, you may learn not to judge too severely of those who are exercised with frequent and long Afflictions. Do not think too hardly of thy self or others on this account; we are very apt to do so. Christ says, *Think ye that they were greater sinners on whom the Tower of Siloam fell? I tell you nay.* Job's Friends, tho' they had nothing to charge him with, yet they thought he was a very ill Man, because God was pleased so sorely to afflict him. They were not able to account

count for this, How evil things should happen to good Men. Therefore *Eliphaz* made this false Inference, *Job* 4.7. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?* But *Job* said, He would not let go his integrity; he would not believe but that God did love him, and he God, though he was afflicted. And God says of *Job's* Friends, that they *had not spoken of him the things that were right*, *Job* 42. 2.

Afflictions of themselves do not infer that we are less beloved than others are, for we cannot know love or hatred by the things that are before us. The most afflicted persons may be those that are most beloved of God; therefore do not pass sharp censures upon thy self or others. Do not say, because I am afflicted, God doth not love me; nor do not judge so of others. Those who know what it is to be under long and sharp afflictions, find it needful to have this confirmed in their minds, That God loves them, though they are sharply afflicted by him.

Hence learn to have good thoughts of God, of the *use* II. Love, Goodness, Truth, and Providence of God; for as we are inclined under Afflictions to judge amiss of our selves, so of God too. Take heed then you do not call the Being, the Love, Goodness, Truth, and Providence of God into question. Under Affliction we are apt to *despise the chastening of the Lord*, or to *faint when we are rebuked of him*. The Soul is apt to say, Does God hear Prayer? How comes it to pass then that notwithstanding all my Prayers and Tears I am thus exercised? The Soul is apt many times thus unbelievingly to expostulate, *Will the LORD cast off for ever? and will he be fa-*

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vourable

ourable no more? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? But the Psalmist corrects himself, *And said this is my infirmity, &c. Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9, 10.* O take heed thou dost not call the various Perfections of God into question. You see how reconcileable Afflictions are to the Divine Power, Wisdom, Goodness and Truth, since God hath such holy Ends in all the Tryals he sends upon thee: his design is either to correct thee for Sin, or to try thy Grace, or to prevent some greater evil. God designs to make them to turn to some spiritual Benefit to thy Soul.

Use III.

Be perswaded to labour after a holy, humble, contented, resigned frame of Spirit under all thy various Tryals. Labour to have that excellent frame that was in Christ, and ought to be transcribed by us, to say, *Not my will, but thine be done.* Our Will are foolish and sinful; God's Will is holy, wise, just and good. God knows better what is good for us than we do for our selves. Herein lies the Summ of Holiness and Happiness, in an universal, constant, cheerful compliance with God's preceptive Will and an humble, resign'd, patient bearing of his afflictive Will. Labour to have thy Will brought up into the Will of God. 'Twas the saying of a Heathen, That he would always have his Will, because he would always will what God willed. This is a saying worthy a Christian; when your Will is conform'd to the Will of God, this is the most commendous way to have your will.

Use IV.

Be perswaded under all your Afflictions to labour after the sanctification and due improvement of them. Take heed that no Affliction passes away without

without obtaining some spiritual good by it. How sad will it be, if Afflictions take away this, that, and the other outward Good, and this be not made up with the communication of some spiritual good ! Be not so solicitous for the removing the outward Affliction, as that thy Soul may improve in Grace by it : that which you should desire is, That you may be more humble, more holy, and more spiritual. Be not so much concern'd for an outward Deliverance, as a Deliverance by the Supports of Divine Grace, and the sanctification of thy Nature by thy Afflictions: let them all be turned to some advantage to thy Soul ; and see that they prove a means to prepare thee for Heaven : and being thus sanctified, they will become comfortable pledges to thee, that thou shalt be shortly translated to that blessed place where all Sin and Misery shall be done away, and thou admitted to the immediate Sight and full Enjoyment of God for ever.



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A Short

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE

OF

M^{rs} *Elizabeth Gibson.*

THE deceased Person (my late dear Wife) being desirous to go as silently out of the World, as she had chosen to live retiredly in it, left no Direction concerning any Text to be preached upon on the occasion of her Funeral: But the variety of providential Dispensations wherewith she was exercised, and her great Support and excellent Department under them, as well as Improvement of them, being so extraordinary, I thought my self obliged in Conscience, not to omit this Opportunity of giving Glory to God, and Instructing, Establishing and Comforting others by her Example, that are, or may be brought under the like tryals. Whereupon, casting about in my mind, what Text might be most agreeable to the Case of the Deceased, and might best answer these Ends I aimed at in having a Sermon preached;

preached; presently that of the Psalmist came in-
to my thoughts, which I recommended to a wor-
thy Minister, that though otherwise a stranger,
had at my desire sometimes visited my Wife in
her last Illness; the Pastor of the Congregation to
which she belonged, being for many Months be-
fore (and still is) confined to his House by a pain-
ful and (as 'tis feared) incurable Disease. But this
Person thus pitched upon lay under so great a
disadvantage of *exemplifying* the Text in the Per-
son of the deceased, because of his small acquaint-
ance with her, that when he preached this Ser-
mon, he could be but very short in shewing how
agreeable her Case was to the Text, or in giving
her true Character. And now that the Sermon is
Printed, he has in a manner quite omitted that
part, thinking it more proper to leave it to me, as
being better capacitated to do it, partly through
my long Conversation with her and Observation of
her Christian walking; and partly by the help of
several Papers she has left behind, containing an
Account of the more remarkable providential Deal-
ings of God with her, throughout the greatest
part of her Life, and how she was enabled through
Grace to carry it under them. And therefore I
have taken this Task upon my self, esteeming it
as a Testimony I owe to the Grace of God in
her.

Now that the Reader may know what is tran-
scribed from those Papers; whatever is so, has this
mark " (or double Comma's) prefixed to it line
by line. And as I shall not enlarge much beyond
what she her self has thus writ (especially in the
historical Part); So I shall in my Method keep as

near to the Text of Scripture preached upon at her Funeral, as I can; because one of my main Designs is to shew how eminent an Instance she was of the truth of it. And therefore I shall first give an Account of her many Afflictions, (which will necessitate me to give a short History of her Life.) Secondly, Describe her Righteousness. And Thirdly, Shew her Deliverance out of her many Afflictions.

She was third Daughter to George Smith Esq; Per- a Councellour at Law, formerly of Greys Inn, who was appointed (*Anno Dom. 1658.*) by the Government that then was, to be a Judge in Scotland, whither he took along with him his Lady and his two youngest Daughters, of which the Deceased was one, being then about eleven years of age. There while he was in the Circuit, many Miles distant from his Family, (that staid in *Edenburgh*) it pleased God after a few days illness (occasioned, as twas supposed, by a Fall from his Horse) to take him out of this Life, to the great Loss and Grief of his whole Family, but of none more than his Daughter *Elizabeth*, to whom he had generally expressed greater Affection than to the rest. This is the first Affliction that she has recorded in the Papers above-mentioned, wherein she notes divers Circumstances that aggravated it: as "That her Mother and self, and youngest Sister, were now in a strange Land, three hundred Miles from home or any Relation, and it was at such a Season of the year, that it was dismal to think of travelling, both for the shortness of Days, and sharpness of Weather, and also the danger of Thieves and Robbers, which were then very numerous upon the Borders. But notwithstanding

“ing all these Difficulties, through the Protection and Conduct of him who is an Husband, the Widow, and a Father to the Fatherless, they returned safely to their own Country and Habitation: For which, says she, my Soul did thank and praise God according to my Capacity, and have often since given thanks to him, and desire to keep it in my thankful remembrance as long as I live.

When she was fourteen years of Age, the Lord visited her with a *Quartan-Ague*, which held her above two years, and brought upon her various other Weaknesses and Distempers; and indeed laid the foundation of most of the Diseases she afterwards labour'd under for the greatest part of her Life. But she has observed concerning this long illness, “That she hoped she might say without any mistake, That it was a *medicinal Visitation*; and that God made the Sickness of her Body work the Health of her Soul. And says she, “She learned under it to measure the shortness and uncertainty of Time and the present Life, and to meditate on the certainty of Death, and the length and vastness of Eternity.

Being recover'd in some good measure from her Ague and other Distempers that accompanied it; in the said Papers she gives an account that “the Providence of God (in her seventeenth year) put her into a married condition, with a person beloved (as she believed) of God, and one greatly esteemed among men. His name was *Zephaniah Cresset*, sometime a Fellow of *Magdalen College* in *Oxford*. Son to Mr. *Cresset*, who was formerly many years Master of the *Charter-house*, *London*. He was

then settled into any Employment, but designed the Practice of Physick. With him she had lived out about eight months, when by occasion of a fall from his Horse on the Road betwixt London and their home (at S. Margaret's near Ware) he fell into an high Fever, of which he died in a few days. This was a very bitter cup, of which she confesses she did sometimes too much complain: but God mixed honey with the gall, and while he corrected her with one hand, the other supported her: and as an allay to her sorrow, gave her a Son about seven months after her Husband's decease, in whom she took great delight: But when he was about a year and an half old, though a thriving and healthy Child, God was pleased by a very short sickness to remove him also from her. And near the same time her youngest Sister likewise died, for whom she had a great love, being always brought up together from their Childhood, and then lived together, with their Mother.

"Thus, (says she upon occasion of these Afflictions) did the most wise God see it good that I should *bear the yoke in my Youth*; and I hope I can say, it was *good for me*. Blessed be the Lord that took pains with me, and that I might become teachable, made use of various methods in afflicting me, and all to make me *remember my Creatour in the days of my youth*. And blessed be God's holy name for his signal mercy to me at that time (*viz.* in the time of the great Sickness 65.) that when the Pestilence took away five in our Family (which was a third part of the whole) and my self also was in some degree infected, yet my Life was given me for a prey;

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"which

"which O that I had given more up to my God in Praises!

"Under these sharp Providences (adds she) many a cloud and temptation surrounded me, that many times I was afraid to lift an eye of hand to Heaven, and did restrain Prayer before God, and was under great temptations to give myself up to a fullen melancholick frame of Spirit. All the mercies of God were buried in oblivion and the number and nature of my Afflictions were always before me. O Lord, pardon this sin and great iniquity to me, that I should relish a mercy, when thou didst take away some. I then enjoyed a good Mother and all the necessities of life, the least of which I did not deserve. Lord! how much more reason had I to bless thee, than to murmur!---- But after a while the Lord opened my mouth, and with Paul did I cry out, O wretched worm that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of sin and death! Make me anew, O Lord and as thou hast removed the Plague from my body, remove and take away the Plague of my heart and give me an heart after thine own, and subdue the corruptions of my evil nature.---- Some times my Faith seemed to be quite gone, and stuck fast in the mire and clay: but out of the powerful Almighty power raised me, and again enlarged me. O the seasonableness of thy mercy, O God thou art a present help in time of Trouble, and thy my Soul knoweth right well.---- Mr. Burroughs book upon *Christian Contentment*, was of great use to me at this time; and also a Sermon sent me by a Friend on that Text, *Not my will, but thine be done; Father, glorify thy Name.* After reading

"these

"these, and meditating upon the great duty of sub-
 "mitting to, and bowing before the Sovereign
 "pleasure of God, I gained much upon my former
 "melancholy and disorder of Spirit, and God en-
 "abled me to believe, that all he had done to me
 "was from the love of a Father; and that though
 "for the present these Afflictions were not joyous,
 "yet afterwards they should bring forth the peace-
 "able fruits of Righteousness.--- Job 5. 17, 18. Be-
 "hold happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore
 "despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For
 "he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and
 "his hands make whole.

About eight months after these Providences, she
 was "greatly importuned to change her condition
 "again, which she was unwilling to in general;
 "but was more especially averse from being marri-
 "ed to him, who was then most earnest in his
 "Suit. Yet after about three years time the Provi-
 "dence of God ordered it so, that she became his
 "Wife. His name was *Thomas Dawson*, Doctor
 of Physick. God continued them together almost
 fourteen years, during which time it was his plea-
 sure to deny her a Child. "This (says she) was a
 "great exercise to her (having naturally a great
 "love for Children,) but at length she was brought
 "to a willingness to submit to the Will and Wis-
 "dom of God.

In about a year and half after her marriage with
 the Doctor, the Lord was pleased to visit her with
 most exquisite pains in her Bowels, (like the Co-
 lick) with a Fever and a Jaundies accompanying
 them, or rather following them, which continued
 for many weeks. At length she voided by Stool

two stones with several corners, which most probably had bred in her Gall-bladder, and in their passage through its narrow neck and the common duct into the Guts, caused those terrible pains which were taken for the Colick. "In this sickness, says she, I appeared to most or all that saw me, as "one nigh unto death, and indeed I received the "sentence of death in my self: and at some times "it was very dark with me as to my eternal state: "but at the worst I was enabled to keep some hold "of Jesus Christ, and to stay my self on that blessed Rock of Ages. Ever blessed be the name of "my God, who though he shewed me great trouble, yet did quicken me again, and rescue me "from the jaws of death! Then did I say, Lord, "teach me to number my days so as to apply my "heart unto Wisdom: help me all the days of my "appointed time to wait till my change come, and "to welcome it when it comes. Lord, help me to "serve thee better with that life thou hast preserved; "for my *body* as well as my soul is thine, (*Rom. 12.1.*) "Let it, as it is most *reasonable*, be worn out in thy "service here, and let it partake of *glory* and happiness in the World to come, *Philip, 3.21.*

The next great Affliction that she has noted down in her Papers, was the death of her dear and tender Mother (*Ann. Dom. 77.*) after many months languishing. This Providence was the more sad, because now God had stript her of all her nearest Relations by blood; Her Father died many years before; her youngest Sister in the Sickness year, as was noted before: and her two elder Sisters betwixt that time and this. But she did then "say "with the Psalmist, *Though father and mother have*
"forsaken

"forſaken me, yet ſurely the Lord will take me up, in
 "to his care, whoſe love far exceeds the love and
 "care of the beſt of Parents, And bleſſed be his
 "Name, that he has been ſuch a good and graci-
 "ous Father unto his poor unworthy Worm, com-
 "forting and ſupporting me under this and many
 "other afflictions!

Hitherto ſhe had always lived with her Mother
 in the Country: but upon her Mother's death, the
 Doctor removed to *London*, where they lived to-
 gether about five years. In the year 1682. ſhe eſca-
 ped Death very narrowly in the *Meaſles*, and re-
 mained very weak and low after them, ſo that it
 was thought adviſeable for her to go into the
 Country for the recovery of her Stomach and
 Strength. She had been there but a few days, when
 ſhe received the ſad tidings of her Husband's ſudden
 Death at his houſe in *London*. This ſurprizing affli-
 ctive Providence brought her into dreadful Fits of
 an hysterical Colick, which came very thick one after
 another for a year or two afterwards, eſpecially up-
 on any new occaſions of grief and trouble. And
 of thoſe ſhe had not a few, as well from Relati-
 ons as others: But I ſhall forbear to give an ac-
 count of them, becauſe I would not ſtain the me-
 mory of ſome now dead, nor reflect upon others
 yet living.

"Under theſe exerciſes, ſhe ſays, She had ma-
 "ny a combat with her own naughty Heart, and
 "Satan. She was ready to ſay with old *Jacob*,
 "All theſe things are againſt me. Sometimes ſhe
 "even fainted under her troubles, but God was
 "pleaſed to ſupport her, eſpecially by that word,
 "Gen. 15, 1. *I am thy ſhield and exceeding great re-*
 "ward.

"*word.* Whilest the power of this Word was upon her, she says, She was got above all her troubles, and with great confidence and comfort was able to leave all with God, and to cast her care upon him, as *her* God, believing she should find a honey drop at the end of these smarring Rods. But after these refreshing Beams, adds she, the Clouds returned again, so that many times I staggered under my Burthen, but through Grace, was not quite over-turned, a secret Power still sustaining me. God taught me at this time many self and world-abasing Lessons, so that I have ever since had a truer estimate of all Creature-comforts. And the often reading over the second Chapter of Ecclesiastes, hath been very profitable to me to judge of the world aright.

Thus far I have given an Account of the more considerable Afflictions wherewith she was exercised, from her own Notes: for the remainder of her Life, I need not have so much recourse to them, mine acquaintance with her commencing a few Months after the last Affliction mentioned. At which time she had frequent Fits of the Colick, which I spoke of before; and in the Intervals, was seldom free from a pain at her Stomach, and those various Symptoms that vulgarly come under the denomination of *Fluxions*. About two Years and an half after Dr. Danson's death, she became my Wife; since which time, I have been a sorrowful eye-witness of the almost continual indispositions she laboured under from day to day. Want of Appetite, Indigestion, Vomiting, Diarrhoea,

racking

lacking Scorbucal Pains in her Limbs, Lassitude
 &c. were her almost constant Grievances. Besides
 violent Coughs, considerable hydropical Swellings,
 and piercing lancinating Pains in her side, which
 frequently seized upon her. And, to mention no
 more, violent Convulsion-Fits fill'd up the last
 doleful scene of her Life, seven whereof she had
 in the space of eleven days. This I can say, That
 during the (near) seven years that we lived toge-
 ther, she had not (so far as I remember) one day
 free from Pains or Sickness; so that when she seem-
 ed at the best, if she were ask'd how she did, the
 best answer she could give was, *Not so bad as
 some times, but far from well: but, blessed be God,*
would she add, for any mitigation. And the nights
 were as wearisome and restless, as the days were
 sick and painful; and her sleeps disturbed and un-
 refreshing: So that her Case was much the same
 with Job's (Chap. 7.) *As a servant earnestly desireth
 the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of
 his work: So am I made to possess months of vanity, and
 wearisome nights are appointed to me--- When I say,
 my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall cease my com-
 plaint: Then thou scarest me with dreams, and territ-
 iest me through visions. When I lie down, I say, when
 shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of
 tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. But the
 remembrance of these continual exercises is it self
 so afflicting, that I can no farther enlarge in the re-
 lation of them.*

Nor did her own Maladies and Distempers alone
 lie thus continually upon her, but she was extream-
 ly affected with the afflictions and griefs of others,
 and had the tenderest fellow-feeling of them. So
 that

that I found it necessary, to hide from her, as much
 as I could, (and to warn those with whom I
 most frequently conversed, to do so too) such
 Providences as happened abroad in the world. For
 as the Apostle saith, *who was afflicted, and she mourn-*
ed not? But the sufferings of the Church and People
 of God occasion'd her greatest grief and mourning.
 Many thousand sighs did she breathe out, and shed
 many tears upon this account: And daily did she
 intercede with God in fervent Prayer for their he-
 and relief. Thus was she concern'd particularly for
 the poor Protestants of *France and Piedmont*. And
 many sheets of Meditations, consisting principally
 ejaculatory Prayers, did she commit to writing on
 these occasions. To give a taste of them. "O Lord
 "I desire to tremble at the remembrance and thought
 "of thy Judgments both past and present, at home
 "and abroad. Thou art terrible in the display
 "thy Power and Majesty, and that unto thine own
 "People. What then shall thine Enemies do, when
 "thou appearest against them, and pourest out thine
 "vials of thy wrath and indignation on them?
 "Thine have the staff with the rod, their Father
 "love with their Father's corrections; and though
 "it smart, it shall end with time: but as for others
 "the wrath of God shall burn against them to the
 "lowest hell, and Eternity is set upon it. O Lord
 "enter into Judgment with thy irreconcilable En-
 "mies in all parts: and pity thine who are killed
 "all the day long for thy Name's sake. Let their
 "consolations abound as their sufferings abound
 "and cause their Faith and Patience to overcome
 "men and devils. Make thy sharp dispensations
 "them thine ordinance for good, and keep up

them that blessed frame of spirit that was in the three Children of old, and help them to resolve, That *whether thou shalt deliver them or not*, they will not transgress thy commands in falling down to and *worshipping graven Images*. Let it be said of them, *Lo, here is the faith and patience of the Saints!*... Help the righteous to keep on their way, though they walk in the midst of trouble: Revive thou them, and let them grow stronger and stronger; Let thy right hand save them: O forsake not the work of thine own hands! Let the scattered Flocks be gathered again, and cause them to feed in green pastures, and to lie down by the still waters. *Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood,--- and in thy time let them feed in Basban and Gilead, as in the days of old. Let the nations see it, and be astonised,* Mic. 7. 14, 15.

And as the sufferings of God's people did greatly afflict her; so did it pierce her heart, to think of the great dishonour done to God by the Professours of Religion declining so much from the power of godliness; and that Wickedness of all kinds was come to so daring an height amongst the prophane World: What the Prophet saith of himself, may be truly said of her, *Rivers of tears ran down her cheeks, because men kept not God's Law.*

But while I was giving an account of her *Afflictions*, I am fallen insensibly into those, which may perhaps be more properly noted under the next head, to wit her *Righteousness*, which I shall now proceed to give a short description of.

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Though she were thus a Woman of sorrow, and even continually acquainted with grief, yet I doubt not to put her even in the first rank of those holy and righteous ones, whom though God chasten yet he most dearly loves. To demonstrate which shall go no further backwards than the time of my first acquaintance with her, though I might have abundant testimony from those that knew what her conversation in the former part of her life had been, to confirm what I am now to set forth.

I shall begin with her *Piety towards God*; and first as to his *Worship*. When I was first acquainted with her, (in her Widowhood) she set a large portion of her time, than is usual, apart for Reading, Meditation and Prayer. One hour every morning and two in the evening were the shortest allowance. And I found it one of her difficultest objections to get over against entering again into a married state, that the care of a Family would abridge her in that time, that now she could with freedom devote, in a larger proportion, to the offices of Piety and Religion.

About that time, (to wit 1683.) was the severe persecution of the Dissenters, so that they were forced to Meet with the greatest caution and privacy, and therefore they generally went to the place of Meeting, in the Winter time, before day: From these Assemblies neither could her almost continual Indispositions of body, nor the Rigour of the season, nor the Unseasonableness of the time, detain her: but she was one of the most constant Attenders upon the Ordinances, though sometimes the Meetings were a-mile from her Lodgings. So that she would often afterward wonder, how it was possible

possible for her to do it. Sometimes they assembled in the Evening after the day was gone, and then also she would be sure to make one. In the Summer time the hour of Meeting was generally about twelve, when most people being at Dinner, they were not at leisure to stand gazing and observing who went in or out. The want of her usual repast, and the heat of the Sun at that time of the day, which upon other occasions she could not endure, did not cause her to absent her self. Not to mention the hazard that was then run, as to Fines and Imprisonment, the first of which she was often involved in. Her love to the Ordinances of God, and the delight she took in his Worship, carried her above all these things: and her *spirit* was so *willing*, that it quite overcame and superseded the *weakness* of the *flesh*.

And as this was her practice in her Widowhood, so I can say, that her being afterwards in a married state, and so encumbred with the Cares of a Family, did neither abate her Zeal as to the publick Worship of God, nor cause her (as she feared) to shorten the stated times of her every days Devotion. While she had yet some competent degree of strength, she would be sure to be as early up as she could possibly bear, that she might finish her own private Closet-devotions, before the performance of Family-duty. And when Weaknesses grew so upon her, that she could not do that, as soon as Family-duty was over, and she had given to her Servants what directions were necessary for the Businesses of that day, she would betake her self to her usual retirement, before she went about the dressing of her self, or engaged in any other Business.

And as to her evening Solitude, she still continued that to a full length; and that she might do so, if she went abroad in the afternoon about business, or on visiting, she would generally in the Summer time be at home by six, and in the Winter before the day was gone: so that neither her own Affairs, nor the Importunities of her Friends to gratifie them with more of her company, could induce her to shorten that time that she had set apart for converse and communion with God in spiritual Exercises.

This was the course of every day; which she exceeded on the *Lord's day*. Then (till extream weakness disabled her) she was generally the first up in the house, a considerable while sooner than her usual time of rising, alledging, That though the Sabbath was a day of rest, yet it was not of sloth; and that it was unworthy a Servant of God, to be more early at his own work on the Week-day, than at his Master's work on the Lord's day. That whatever it was to others (whom she would not judge) she found it not so easie a business to bring her Soul into a fit frame for the publick Worship of God, as that it could be done betwixt the Bed and the Church, taking in only the time of dressing. Both morning and afternoon she attended the publick Worship, while her strength held out; for *a day in God's Courts was better to her than a thousand elsewhere*. And in the evening after her return from afternoon-Sermon, she commonly spent all the time till Supper was ready in private, *partly*, in recollecting what she had heard that day, and noting down what she thought most remarkable, relying upon her memory till then, thinking that (to her who could

could not write in short-hand) a better way than
to write Notes in the Church; and *partly*, in read-
ing, and then meditating upon what she had heard
and read, and in praying to God for a blessing on
both. And as I find in the Papers which I have oft
mentioned before, she was a strict enquirer into her
own carriage in the duties wherein she had been ex-
ercised either in publick or private, and a severe
censurer of her self for any miscarriages she appre-
hended her self to be guilty of. Give me leave to set
down an Instance somewhat largely. "Sept. 28. 86.
I have not found my Soul this day in such a frame,
as the holy Ordinances of the Lord require, but
much discomposed. O Lord, what shall I say be-
fore thee! How shall I apply my self unto thee!
I am amazed when I think how disorderly and
evil the frame of my Soul is in thy service both
publick and private. O that such swarms of di-
stressing and distracting thoughts should vent
themselves in the special presence of God in duty!
Well may I cry out with *Ezra* (ch. 9. 6.) O my
God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up. For ever
help me to admire thy Patience, that thou hast
not spurned me from thy presence and cast me
into Hell in the very acts of provocation. Blessed
Jesus, do thou bear the iniquity of my holy
things, and by thy oblation and intercession let
me obtain a full pardon for my praying, hearing
and Sacrament-sins; and help my Soul, for it is
vexed. Do thou graciously also rebuke the di-
stempers of my body, that do greatly add to the
hurries of my Soul. I have groaned often under
these things, O Lord, relieve and help me. O for
a full Cure, at least some good Conquest! They
have

" have robbed me of much sweet communion with
 " God : Blessed Lord, appear for me, give thy poor
 " Worm seasonable and sufficient help, and disperse
 " the clouds that my sins have gathered, whereby
 " God's face is covered, and the manifestations of
 " his Love and Favour obstructed. --- Strengthen
 " me, O Lord, against that suggestion of Satan
 " that such disorders of Soul as mine, are not the
 " stain or spot of thy children : I find many of
 " them sick of the same disease, and groaning un-
 " der such a body of death as I do. --- But O that
 " might long more than ever to be there, where
 " my sanctification shall be as perfect as my justifi-
 " cation is, that I may serve my God uninterrupt-
 " edly ! Lord, make me ready for that holy and
 " happy place, and then come quickly ; O God
 " make no tarrying. The shorter Earth, the longer
 " Heaven. Eternity will not be too long to serve
 " adore and praise thee in. *Amen.*

And as she thus humbled her self before God for
 spiritual disorders and imperfections in duty ; so did
 she no less magnifie the free Grace of God in assist-
 ing her at any time to worship him in some good
 measure as he requireth, in spirit and in truth, with
 holy fear and faith ; and extol his Name for any
 manifestations of his Love unto her Soul. I might
 also add many Instances hereof recorded in the fore-
 said Papers ; but I should be too large, if I should
 continue to be so particular and minute in these
 things.

But here I would add a Specimen of her *Medita-*
tions, consisting partly of Soliloquy, and partly of
 Prayer, as she used to draw them up in her retire-
 ments, judging it more useful to write her thoughts
 down

with down, than only to form them in her head; or ponder them at present in her heart. The Specimen I shall give shall be concerning *Death*.

"*Death*, I must acknowledge, is that which sounds harsh to flesh and blood, and sometimes 'tis more dreadful to me than at other times, according as my Faith is in a stronger or weaker measure acted upon my blessed Lord, who hath taken the sting out of *Death*, for all those that belong to him. To such, *Death* is but the Image of *Death*; 'tis a Writ of Ease, for they enter into peace, they rest in their beds, *Isaiah* 57. 2. from all their labours of Nature, Sin, and Affliction; they sleep in *Jesus*: O blessed sleep! none shall disturb their sweet repose... *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* died, so did the Prophets and Apostles, and were all resolved into their first dust: Nay, the Captain of my Salvation died and was buried, and hath thereby sanctified *Death* and the Grave: Why then should I fear *Death*? I believe that my Redeemer liveth; (Lord, help my unbelief!) and the same Power that raised *Christ*, shall raise me, *Phil.* 3. 21. He is the first-fruits of them that sleep; and of all the Father hath given him, he will lose none, but will raise them up at the last day, *John* 6. 39. Lord, help me to take comfort in that word; Because I live, ye shall live also. And for the present let me have greater experience, that *Christ* liveth in me, by his acting me so powerfully, that I may do all things, believe all things, suffer all things through Grace communicated from him as my head; yea through him encounter the King of terrors without terror; believing, nothing shall separate me from,

"nor

"nor take me out of Christ's hands here, nor out
 "of his bosom for ever. The union of Christ and
 "his Members stands sure, more firm than Heaven
 "and Earth; 'tis compared to the Union between
 "the Father and the Son, *John 17. 21.* O Lord
 "help me by Faith to draw forth the sweetness of
 "this Union; and to take such a view of the Hea-
 "venly Glories, that through an holy impatience
 "it may be as uneasie to me to live, as to others to
 "die: and let the foresight of the Blessedness to
 "come, be as a spur to all diligence in the ways of
 "God; that whatever my hand findeth to do,
 "may do it with all my might, as remembering
 "I have but a moment to work in, but an Eternity
 "to rest in.... O Lord, help me to love thee more
 "and serve thee better; and if thou give me hard-
 "der work, give me greater strength, and keep me
 "faithful: Then let my Cross be, what it will, I am
 "sure it will bear no proportion to my Crown....
 "The glimmerings of thy presence with me will
 "much remove the fear of Death; how much
 "more would the full persuasion of being for ever
 "with the Lord! Dear Lord, I cannot but think
 "if my Soul had this assurance, I should cry out
 "(as the Mother of *Sisera*) *Why stay the wheels of*
 "*his chariot* so long? When shall I be carried into
 "those eternal Mansions where I shall be ever with
 "my Lord? Where all disappointments, all sor-
 "rows shall vanish, the many years of weakness and
 "pains I have laboured under will be forgot, as to
 "any sorrowful sense, and my Soul shall be full of
 "praises to him who sustained my body here, and
 "who will raise it again a glorious body, free from
 "all infirmities and weakness, nay free from all sin.
 "Lord,

Lord, *shew me the path of life*, Psal. 16. 11. which lieth through the Grave; blessed Shepherd of *Israel*, take me by the hand, and lead me through this dark passage into the Presence-chamber of the King of Glory: And I beseech thee, during thy pleasure to keep me here, do thou adorn me and make me ready to hear the Bridegroom's Voice, and to obey his Call with joy.... O how comfortable will it be to close these natural eyes, and to have the eye of my Soul opened, and made fully capable of beholding at once all the Glories of Eternity! O Lord, help me every day more and more to ascend Heaven-ward, that so I may be ready for my last flight to the mountains of Spices, and for the glorious Immortality and Liberty of the Sons of God! My Lord is risen and ascended, help me often to ascend after him in Thoughts and Affections; and let my so doing be a full evidence that I am already risen with Christ in the Resurrection of Holiness, and shall assuredly rise unto a Resurrection of Glory. O Lord, though I walk below, I would live above; tho' I *use* the World, I would *enjoy* God; and with David would I say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee*.... O Lord, if thou seest it fit, notwithstanding all mine unworthiness, let the joy of the Lord enter into my Soul, before my Soul entreth into the Lord's joy. Assurance is not absolutely necessary, but inexpressibly sweet: Without it the Life of a Christian is spent in Hopes and Fears; now the Sun shines out clear, and by and by the Heavens are over-cast and cloudy again. Assurance is a Cordial in Death, and there is none

"like it: this will make the Soul triumph over
 "the Grave, take Death cheerfully by the collar
 "hand, and welcome its grim message. Lord, let
 "thy holy Spirit witness with my Spirit, That I am
 "thy Child, an Heir of the glorious Inheritance.
 "O let me, as a true Saint, leave such testimony behind
 "hind me, that my weeping Friends sorrow may
 "be turned into joy, when they upon good grounds
 "believe, I am safely arrived in a blessed Eternity
 "there beholding the unveiled face of my dear Redeemer
 "deemer.

This Meditation is much longer, but I have transcrib'd enough to shew, to what good purpose she improved her hours of Retirement: and do give me leave to add, here is enough to direct and incite other holy Persons to the like useful management of those hours.

Thus far I have given some account of her Warfare with the flesh, and the world, and the devil, how constant and zealous and accurate she was therein; and in what Exercises she spent the times of her Solitude: which I might add her great desire, That her body (as well as she) might serve the Lord: What repeated and earnest Exhortations she used to her Servants that went to the Publick, that whilst they pretended to go thither, they would not spend the time in idle Visits, as the custom of too many is: and that they would come directly home from Church, and sanctifie the Lord's day in all the parts of it. Offering them the liberty to go and see a Friend or Relation on the Week-day, as oft as reason they could desire, so they would not go gadding on the Lord's day. I might add also, how she was pleased to take a more particular care

over her Boy, to make him stand or sit in her sight at Church (lest he should run out to play, as is too common;) and at home frequently (not only on Sundays but Week-days) to hear him read, and teach him his Catechism: and when she had one that could not read, to send him to School at such hours as he could be spared, and to take the pains also to teach him her self. But I shall pass these over, and proceed to her *Zeal for the True Religion, or Reviz. the Protestant.*

In the late King *James's* Reign, (1688.) when there was such fear of the introducing Popery, our good God! how was she concerned lest Popish Idolatry and Superstition should again take root in this Land! how fervent were her Prayers to God, That he would keep all his Faithful to their Profession, under the severe Tryals that seemed then to be coming upon them! Let this be demonstrated by her pleading with God, as follows:

"O Lord, great Fears and Troubles are upon thy People, because of the Storms and Tempests that are rising. The Lions are coming up from their thickets, and the Destroyers are on their way; O teach the Inhabitants of this Land to lay it to heart, and lament in sackcloth for the fierce anger of the Lord that is coming out against them.... Thou canst at thy pleasure bring ungodly Princes to nothing, and make corrupt Judges as vanity, *Isai.* 40. 23. if thou speak the word, their rock shall not take root in the earth; thou canst blow upon them and they shall wither, and cause the whirlwind to take them away as stubble, *vers.* 24. Lord, now that thy Children cry unto thee, let their enemies

"be turned backwards, Psal. 56. 9. and fulfil that gra-
 "cious promise, of making Kings to be nursing Fa-
 "thers, and Queens nursing Mothers.... And give
 "not only Magistrates, but Ministers after thine
 "own heart; and deliver us from false Prophets
 "and Seducers, who pretend to great Signs and
 "Wonders, lying in wait to deceive.... Have mer-
 "cy on thy afflicted Church, tossed with Tempests
 "and not comforted: When wilt thou lay her stones
 "with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires,
 "and make her gates of carbuncles, and her borders of
 "pleasant stones! O let all thy children be taught of thee,
 "that great may be the peace of thy children, Isai. 54.
 "11, 12, 13. Spread thy Gospel where it is not,
 "and prosper it where it is: cause thy People to
 "renew their strength, whilst they wait on thee:
 "establish their hearts by believing that the coming
 "of the Lord draws near, when he will turn the
 "Prophecy of Babylon into an History, and the great
 "cry shall be, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*.... O Lord,
 "hasten that day when the heavens shall rejoice over
 "her, and all the holy Apostles and Prophets and Saints
 "because God hath avenged them on her, Rev. 18. 20..
 "Lord, I believe every tittle of thy Word shall be
 "fulfilled, though thy Providences at present seem
 "to go quite contrary-ways: therefore help all
 "thine to hold fast the word of thy Patience, that
 "no man may take their Crown; and keep them
 "from taking up with a Religion that is contrary
 "to Reason, their Senses and Scripture, who damn
 "all that are not of their Communion, and take
 "from or add to the Scriptures, as it serves their
 "base interest.... O Lord, thou hast heretofore de-
 "livered thy People once and again from that bloo-

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“dy generation, who glory in their cruelty; for
“thy mercies sake do thou so again: however let
“not thine be defiled by *going a whoring after their*
“*inventions*, lest thy wrath wax hot, and thou abhor
“*thine own inheritance*, Psal. 106. 39, 40. O now in
“this day of distress and darkness pour out a Spirit
“of Prayer and Supplication upon all thine, that
“they may as with one loud cry pierce the Hea-
“vens; and for Christ’s sake let an answer of
“Peace return upon them.....

These were part of her Pleadings with God for
the maintenance of his Truth and the Professours
of it, by which as she did fully demonstrate her
great concern for them; so was she (I doubt not)
with others of the like holy Zeal and Love, a means
by their daily fervent intercessions with God, of
bringing about that miraculous Deliverance, of
which His present Majesty was the more immediate
glorious Instrument.

I should exceed my intended brevity, if I should
thus enlarge on all the Instances of her Piety:
therefore I shall more hastily run over the rest, of
which let the next be her *Humility*, with respect to
the both commanding and providential Will of
God. None could obey the *Commands* of God with
more profound reverence of his Authority, nor
with greater (desires at least of) exactness: yet
with the greatest self-denial and abasement. All
her own Righteousness was in her esteem but as
filthy Rags, and she a poor worthless unprofitable
Servant: But her failings and imperfections she
was prone to magnifie and aggravate even to a
fault, and often to cry out, O this naughty heart!
O this body of death! wretched worm that I am!

as

as you may before partly see by her Reflections upon her self for being in a bad frame one Lord's day, p. 37. And then if we consider her Humility with respect to the *providential* Will of God, how full of Patience and Resignation was it! This indeed as it was an eminent Instance and Evidence of the Grace of God in her, so was it no small part of that deliverance mentioned in the Text preached upon on the occasion of her Funeral. For as is very well observed in the Sermon, God delivers his People from their Afflictions, not only by removing them (which sometimes he sees it meet not to do:) but rather by supporting under them, sanctifying of them, and bringing them to a full acquiescence with his Will therein. But that shall be spoken a little more fully to under the last Head of her *Deliverance*.

Her *Trust* in God was likewise for the generality most steadfast and fixt. She confesses indeed, that under some of the afflictive Providences wherewith she was exercised, she received some shocks, and had her Spirits ruffled and dejected for a time, as you may see in the preceding Relation of them: but after the surprize, as it were, was over, she was enabled to fix and stay her self upon the Promises of God, and even though he slew her, to trust in him. In all imminent dangers, when a carnal Person would have relied on an Arm of flesh, (his own or others) and betaken himself to sinful shifts and worldly policies, her first, and indeed in a manner her whole recourse was to the all-sufficient God, to whom she fled as to a *strong Tower*. And though she was naturally and in ordinary Occurrences exceeding timorous and subject to affrightments (as most hysterical

real Women are) yet on occasions more weighty, whether publick or private, when she had leisure to recollect her self, and search for some promise suited to the Case, 'twas wonderful with what steadiness she would stand the brunt, and how little she would value what seemed to be in the designs of men, believing that God could frustrate them if he pleased, or if he permitted them to succeed, if she and others concerned were found in the way of their Duty, He would make them work for their good.

I shall not need to descend to more particulars of her Duty towards God, as *Hope, Fear, &c.* for as these Graces must necessarily be, where the preceding are in sincerity, (the New man in Regeneration being in the first formation perfect, as to the number of Parts, though not in degree) so have I already sufficiently demonstrated, That notwithstanding her afflicted Life, she was a Righteous Person, first, in respect of her *Piety towards God.*

And no less Righteous was she in respect of the Duties she owed to *others*: which are of *Justice*, and of *Charity*. As to the Duties of *Justice*, she made small reckoning of the *negative* part of them, as, *not to injure* others in their Bodies, Souls, Goods, or good Name: this she lookt upon as so low a degree of Righteousness, that she reckoned such in a bad case that could pretend to no other: But she was not only for doing no evil, but for doing all those Offices of Justice, that the Light of Nature or the Law of God had made due to others on any account. She did unto others, as she would they should do unto her. Her *Humility, Meekness* and *Courtesie*

Courtesie of Behaviour, are known to all that conversed with her. Extremely sensible was she of any kindness shewed her at any time, and never thought she could enough express her *Gratitude*; as numbers can attest, whom both in her Life, and at her Death she made her Debtors. And let me note this by the way, That the Dis-ingenuity and Ingratitude of such as she had deserved well of, gave her generally greater trouble than any other cross that befell her. For it is truly observed by Dr *Patrick* in the Epistle Dedicatory to his Book called *The Heart's Ease*, That there is no greater trouble to some ingenuous Souls, than to be requited with Injuries for the Kindnesses they have done for others. But what just complaints soever she might have of others in this respect, I dare challenge all who could ever pretend to lay any Obligation upon her, Whether if ever it lay in her power, she did not sufficiently in Word and Deed express her kind resentment: to do which I take to be as necessary a piece of Justice, as any other.

Most faithful was she to her *Friends*, keeping inviolably their Secrets, helping them with her Purse or good word, praying for them, and admonishing them of their Faults, if she perceived them guilty of any; which she would do with that art and sweetness, that she seldom made any her Enemy by reprehending of them. And if they persisted in their Faults, especially if more open and scandalous, she would insensibly break off her Acquaintance with them: but if they reformed, or never were guilty, none in the World more constant in their Friendship.

Next

Next if we consider her Righteousness with respect to *Family-Relations*, it was most exemplary: Her tender Love, spotless Fidelity, and ready Compliance with my (lawful) Desires and Inclinations, rendered her a most desirable and agreeable Coke-fellow. For her excellent Example, her Heavenly Conferences, pious Exhortations, daily hearty Prayers for me, as she challenges the highest esteem and kindest Remembrance of her, so I hope I shall for ever have cause to bless God for her and them.

To her *Servants* she was a good Mistress in giving them good Advice, exhorting them to take care of their Souls, setting them an holy Example; taking care of them in their Sickness, as if she had been their Mother, or a Nurse hired for the purpose; in encouraging such as were honest and diligent with Gifts, and being kind to such as came from her, both on the change of their Condition, and afterward.

And as to the management of the Affairs of her family, which is one part of Duty incumbent on the Mistress (as well as Master) of it, she was frugal without pinching, near without affectation, hospitable without pomp or show; and did prescribe to her Servants such methods in their work, that all things went on without noise or hurry. And while she had any Strength or Spirits left, she herself would be constantly employed, coming up to Solomon's description of the Vertuous Woman (Prov. 31.) *She looked well to the ways of her household, and gave not the bread of idleness*, vers. 27.

Lastly, Her *Charity* in some respect or other extended it self to all. Her *Enemies* had it in forgive-

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ness,

ness, and Prayer for them; her *Friends*, in being beforehand with them in all Offices of Love and Kindness; the *bad*, (of her Acquaintance) in Reproofs for their evil ways, and hearty Desires of their Reformation; the *good*, in the most endeared Affection, and Delight in their Society; the *rich*, in rejoicing in their Prosperity; the *poor*, in liberal Supplies of their wants and necessities. To all indeed of this last sort she was inclined to *do good*; but God's poor, called by the Apostle *The housebold of faith*, had always the largest share in this kind of Charity. With such as her Charity could not reach she had the greatest sympathy; and was a daily Intercessour for them at the Throne of Grace, that He who *feedeth the young Ravens when they cry unto him*, would not be unmindful of those upon whom his own Image was impress'd. But to such as she had an Opportunity and Ability to relieve, she would not dwindle her Charity into Pity only and good Wishes, *Be ye warmed and filled*. (James 2. 16.) but would largely and without grudging contribute to their Supply, especially, as I said before, if they were godly poor. I shall mention but one other particular of her Charity, and that was, towards those who differed from her in Opinions of Religion. She did not love to wrangle and dispute about speculative Doctrines; but in whomsoever she could perceive Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, she esteemed them of the Family of God and did not think the true Church of God confined to any Party.

Having

Having given some account of her *Righteousness* in respect to *others*, I shall add something of that which respected *her self*. Of which let the *first* particular be her *Humility*. She seemed the only Person that took no notice of her own Endowments and Accomplishments. How often have I heard her lament her Ignorance in the Mysteries of Salvation, her want of Love unto, and Zeal for God! when none but must acknowledge her to excell in Spiritual Wisdom, and to give the clearest Evidences of holy Love and Zeal. She *denied* her own Righteousness not only in Point of Justification; but was apt to do it, even to a fault, literally, in dis-owning it (at least in degree) as to her Sanctification. And as she was thus humble in what related to her inner man, so also in what related to the outward. She was not puffed up with whatsoever Goods of Nature or of Fortune (as we call them) God had bestowed on her: but wisely considered, that wherewith ever she differed for the better in these things from others, 'twas God had made her to differ; and therefore she ought not to boast or wax proud thereof.

And agreeable to this Humility was her *Contentment* with that state and condition of Life God had put her in. She says indeed in some of the Papers (often referred to) that in the former part of her Life she was not without Temptations to Discontentedness, and to be envious at those above her: but she found a Remedy for this Distemper, which was, "To consider God's Right to give to whom he pleased; and on the other hand to reflect on her own nothingness and unworthiness. And she received great help by an holy Art she used, to

conquer this Temptation: "That I might procure
 "a contented and thankful frame of heart, says she,
 "I did often walk to the poor Neighbour's houses,
 "and take notice how contented they were in their
 "condition, though many of them never saw 20.
 "Shillings beforehand in their houses in many
 "years: whereas I had all things necessary and
 "convenient, and many superfluous.] But neither
 inbred Corruption nor outward Temptation moved
 at all this way in her riper years. Since my Relation
 to her, she was on all occasions magnifying the
 Goodness and Bounty of God to her, and blessing
 him for *the food convenient* she enjoyed: often saying,
 she would not change conditions with them that
 had thousands by the Year, and that she never desired
 an Estate but to do good with it.

I shall not need to mention her *Chastity*, her *Temperance*
 in Eating and Drinking, &c. the Vices contrary to these
 Vertues being so abominable, that every gracious heart
 (like hers) cannot but rise with abhorrence at the very
 mention of them. Yet it may not be amiss to note one
 particular as to her Temperance in Drinking. It is but too
 common a practice for sickly and hysterical Women to
 be often sipping of Cordial Waters to break the Wind
 off their stomach, as they phrase it: This though
 generally done at first upon a medicinal account,
 does too too often introduce a liking of such
 Spirits themselves. But she was so shie of this
 scandalous Habit, that though she kept variety of
 Cordial Waters by her, and seemed to have as great
 need as any whatever of such kind of helps, yet
 verily believe she did not drink a Quart in a twelve
 month, partly, because she was satisfied they were

but a palliating Remedy, and did more hurt than good; but more, lest a liking of them should steal upon her.

Thus I have given a short account of this gracious Person's *Righteousness*, a Copy far short indeed of the Original; but full enough to demonstrate, how justly she might be numbred amongst those *Righteous* ones whom God is (many times) pleased to exercise with *many afflictions*: And all I shall add, shall be only a word two, to shew how the latter part of the *Text* agrees to her as well as the former, *viz.* That she was *delivered out of all those Afflictions*.

This she was first by her acquiescence in the Will of God. What her frame was under those Afflictions that befell her before mine acquaintance with her, there is some account of in the foregoing Relation of them, as recorded by her self: and it cannot be expected I should add any thing thereto. But since my conversation with her before and after Marriage, I can fully testifie (to the Glory of the Goodness and Faithfulness of God) that she was delivered this way I have mentioned. She was indeed most acutely affected with her continual Pains and Sicknes, and was apt to express what she felt by Sighs and Groans, and would say they were very hard to flesh and blood: but, would she add, *It is the will of God it should be so, He sees them necessary, and I submit. The Lord give me faith and patience.*

Secondly, She was delivered by a Sanctification of her Afflictions. These did not harden her in sin, as oft they do the ungodly; did not provoke her

her to murmur, and reflect upon the Justice or Goodness of God: but weaned her from the Love of Self and the World, and blunted the edge of all Temptations from thence. The *flesh* with its sinful *affections*, and the deluding *world* hereby became more *crucified* unto her, as the Apostle exhorts. And to be sure she always made sin and corruption bear the blame of all. Every new trouble put her upon a fresh Examination of her heart and ways: and her humble Soul was even too apt to find or to greaten faults; that she might the more justify God; and would needs have those Afflictions to be in the nature of Corrections and Punishments, which there is the greatest reason to believe were only for trial and exercise.

Lastly, She was delivered literally and fully at her Death, and in some measure for a little while before. The nearer she drew to her end, she felt the less pain; and after the Convulsions (mentioned before) came upon her, she made no complaint at all. Her Pain and Sicknes either quite ceased, or else she had no perception of them, which was all one as to her ease. She was wholly delivered also from the Fears and Terrours of Death, for she did not intimate the least apprehension of it. She had always a mean esteem, as of Death-bed Repentance, so of Death-bed Preparation for Death; saying, That a good Life was the best Preparation for Death: that those who lived well, could hardly die ill; and on the contrary, those that had lived ill, seldom died well, for all their seeming (formal) Preparation. That dulness that was brought upon her Senses by the Convulsions, did in part dull her Reason also, though not disturb

it:

it: But she cared not to enter into long discourses; was only desirous of Prayer for her, and imployed in secret intercourses with God. To the very last she would not refuse any thing offer'd her for her Help and Recovery, though for a long time she had been of opinion that all was to no purpose, and desired rather to be dissolved and to be with Christ. But as I said, though she had no Recovery, it pleased God to give her ease, and to grant her as quiet a passage out of this troublesome World as ever any could have. And shall I say she was now at length fully *delivered*? That word is too low to express the Advantage and Benefit of the Change. The ungodly are also at Death *delivered* from all the Troubles and Evils of this Life: But such as She, besides that then they begin to be exempted from all the Afflictions and Miseries of Mortality, are moreover received into the bliss of the Life Immortal. While the wicked pass from bad to worse, from temporal to eternal Sufferings: These have not only all Tears wiped from their Eyes, and all Sorrows removed from their Hearts, but are moreover *filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

F I N I S.